



U.S. Department of Justice

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PRESS RELEASE

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NORTHWEST DISTRICT MAN FOUND GUILTY OF FIRST DEGREE MURDER FOR 2008 SLAYING

--defendant arrested in North Carolina after fleeing the area following the shooting--

Washington, D.C. - A 37-year-old Northwest District of Columbia man, Pedro Petrovic, has been found guilty of First Degree Premeditated Murder while Armed and other charges relating to a killing which occurred at 300 Riggs Road, NE, Washington, D.C. in April 2008, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced today. A Superior Court jury convicted the defendant late yesterday of the charges. He faces sentencing before the Honorable Michael L. Rankin on July 16, 2010.

According to the government's evidence at trial, on April 13, 2010, Bladimir Morel and a friend met the defendant at an after hours party in the Mt. Pleasant area of Washington, D.C. While Mr. Morel and his friend were driving home on Riggs Road, NE, the defendant drove up next to them and fired into the vehicle in which Mr. Morel was seated. Mr. Morel was struck once; the friend survived and drove the decedent to a nearby hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries. Drivers in vehicles close by at the time of the shooting phoned the police, and one witness wrote down the tag number of the car in which she saw the shooter. Police quickly associated that tag number with another address in the Mt. Pleasant area, and went to secure the premises while obtaining a search warrant.

Sometime later, witnesses in an adjacent home saw a man matching the general description of the shooter on a roof space outside their windows. The man then jumped across a ten-foot gap across the alley some 20 feet below and ran along the rooftops of the adjacent buildings. An MPD detective in the area heard noises coming from the rear of a store and then saw the defendant emerging from behind the store. The detective followed the defendant, but was not able to apprehend him. Upon obtaining the search warrant police searched the rooftops of adjacent buildings and recovered a weapon, wrapped in a blanket. Forensic testing revealed the gun to be the same gun used to kill the decedent. Mobile Crime Technicians recovered a hair from inside the ejection port of the weapon, and further forensic testing revealed the hair to match the defendant's DNA.

The defendant was on the run from the police for six months before police stopped him in North Carolina on an unrelated matter and eventually learned his true identity and of the existence of an arrest warrant for the murder of Bladimir Morel. In December 2008, the defendant was returned to Washington, D.C. for trial.

After approximately six hours of deliberations, the jury found the defendant guilty of First Degree Premeditated Murder while Armed, Possession of a Firearm during the Commission of a Crime of Violence or Dangerous Offense and Carrying a Pistol Without a License. At sentencing, the defendant will face a mandatory minimum sentence of 30 years of incarceration, with a potential maximum sentence of over 60 years in jail.

In announcing the verdict, U.S. Attorney Machen praised the outstanding investigative work of Detectives Douglas Carlson, Paul Regan, Tony Patterson and Ray Shields, all of the Metropolitan Police Department. Detectives Carlson's and Regan's swift and thorough initial investigation led to the issuance of an arrest warrant within three weeks of the homicide. Mobile Crime Technicians James Holder, Jay Gregory, Ralph Nitz, Mary Turner and Michael Deprince are to be commended for their intensive searches of multiple scenes as well as their thorough follow-up which led to the discovery of the hair inside the weapon as well as DNA, hair and fiber and other evidence. In addition, Mr. Machen commended the work of Dr. Mellisa Brassell of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner for the State of Maryland, as well as Firearms expert Michael Mulderig, Hair and Fiber Analyst Harold Deadman and DNA analyst Jennifer Zeffer, all working for the Metropolitan Police Department. Mr. Machen also commended paralegal specialist Kwasi Fields and Litigation Services Specialist Jeannie Lattimore-BrownYoung for their support. Finally, Mr. Machen acknowledged the work of Assistant U.S. Attorneys Tom Gillice and Reagan Taylor who tried the case.

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